

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KARACH 02654 271330Z

47

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7737

INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA

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AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMCONSUL LAHORE

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SUBJ: BALUCHISTAN -- IMPASSE REMAINS UNRESOLVED

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SUMMARY: DECEMBER 2 ASSASSINATION OF KHAN ABDUS SAMAD

KHAN ACHAKZAI HAS THUS FAR FAILED TO PRODUCE ANY SERIOUS

DETERIORATION OF LAW AND ORDER SITUATION IN BALUCHISTAN.

FINDINGS OF JUDICIAL PROBE INTO ASSASSINATION NOT PUBLI-

CIZED ALTHOUGH THEY REPORTEDLY SUBMITTED TO GOVERNOR

BUGTI. MID-MONTH FLURRY OF RUMORS THAT SIGNIFICANT

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PAGE 02 KARACH 02654 271330Z

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS LIKELY IN PROVINCE REMAIN UNFUL-

FILLED. PRESS ACCOUNTS THAT GOVERNOR BUGTI TO STEP DOWN DECEMBER 31 WERE CONTRADICTED FOLLOWING DAY AND PRESIDENT OF PAKISTAN HAS PUBLICLY EXPRESSED DESIRE THAT HE STAY ON FOR GOOD OF PROVINCE AND COUNTRY. BRIEF VISIT TO BALUCHISTAN DECEMBER 25 FOR PURPOSE OF CONSOLING MEMBERS OF BEREAVED ACHAKZAI FAMILY DESCRIBED BY PRIME MINISTER AS NON-POLITICAL. THUS, IT APPEARS THAT DESPITE POPULAR EXPECTATIONS AND BACKSTAGE MANEUVERING, ACCOMMODATION BETWEEN REGIME AND RECALCITRANT NAP ELEMENTS IN PROVINCE REMAINS TO BE REACHED. END SUMMARY

1. NON-REACTION TO ACHAKZAI'S ASSASSINATION: ASSASSINATION OF KHAN ABDUS SAMAD KHAN ACHAKZAI DECEMBER 2 (REFTEL A) HAS NOT BEEN FOLLOWED BY ANY SERIOUS DETERIORATION OF THE UNSETTLED SITUATION IN BALUCHISTAN. SOME OF

THOSE ARRESTED SHORTLY AFTER EVENT HAVE BEEN RELEASED AND DECEMBER 10-13 ONE JUDGE JUDICIAL INQUIRY ORDERED BY GOVERNOR BUGTI (REFTEL B), WHICH MET FOR ONLY FOUR DAYS AND EXAMINED A TOTAL OF 17 WITNESSES, FAILED TO PRODUCE ANY REVELATIONS REGARDING THE ASSASSINS OR THEIR MOTIVATIONS. IT WAS REPORTED IN LOCAL PRESS DECEMBER 24 RESULTS OF THIS INQUIRY WERE PRESENTED TO GOVERNOR BUGTI, BUT NOTHING WAS SAID REGARDING REPORT'S CONTENT.

2. RUMORS OF BALUCHISTAN NAP LEADERS' RELEASE NOT REALIZED: POPULAR SPECULATION THAT MENGAL, MARRI AND BIZENJO MIGHT BE RELEASED, REPORTED IN REFTEL C, HAS ABATED SINCE BHUTTO PRESENTED NO NEW DEPARTURES ON BALUCHISTAN IN HIS PUBLIC ADDRESS DECEMBER 20 REFTEL D). BALUCHISTAN CHIEF MINISTER TOLD CONSUL GENERAL MORNING OF DECEMBER 24 THAT NAP LEADERS, EVEN THOUGH THEIR PLACE OF CONFINEMENT HAS BEEN CHANGED, DEFINITELY HAD NOT BEEN RELEASED AND HE OFFERED NO INDICATION THAT HE EXPECTED THEIR RELEASE IN NEAR FUTURE. IT IS BELIEVED THAT POSITION OF NAP LEADERS THAT ARMY MUST BE WITHDRAWN TO BARRACKS IN PROVINCE AND THAT THEY BE RELEASED AS PRE-CONDITIONS TO ENTERING IN DISCUSSIONS WITH REGIME APPARENTLY STILL UNACCEPTABLE TO PRIME MINISTER.

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PAGE 03 KARACH 02654 271330Z

3. PRESIDENT AND PRIME MINISTER VISIT BALUCHISTAN: PAKISTAN'S PRESIDENT CHAUDRY FAZAL ELAHI VISITED BALUCHISTAN DECEMBER 21-23 AND AT THE CONCLUSION OF HIS VISIT MADE PUBLIC STATEMENT THAT HE WISHED GOVERNOR BUGTI WOULD STAY ON FOR THE GOOD OF THE PROVINCE AND COUNTRY. ON DECEMBER 25 PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO JOURNEYED TO HOME VILLAGE OF ACHAKZAI VIA QUETTA FOR PURPOSE OF CONSOLING BEREAVED FAMILY AND SUBSEQUENTLY STATED IN LAHORE THAT NO POLITICAL DIS-

CUSSIONS HAD BEEN HELD DURING HIS QUETTA VISIT, NOTING ALSO THAT HE DID NOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF A DIALOGUE WITH HIS OPPOSITION.

4. GOVERNOR BUGTI REMAINS IN PLACE: ALTHOUGH HIS RESIGNATION HAS BEEN "ACCEPTED IN PRINCIPLE", GOVERNOR BUGTI REMAINS IN OFFICE. PRESS REPORTS DECEMBER 19 THAT GOVERNOR WOULD STEP DOWN DECEMBER 31 WERE CONTRADICTED BY GOVERNOR'S SPOKESMAN THE FOLLOWING DAY, AND NO DATE SET PUBLICLY FOR HIS ACTUAL RELINQUISHMENT OF OFFICE.

5. COMMENT: IN DECEMBER 16 INTERVIEW WITH FOREIGN JOURNALISTS (REFTEL C) PRIME MINISTER PLAYED BALUCHISTAN IN LOW KEY, MINIMIZING NUMBER OF TROOPS INVOLVED, CONTRADICTING GOVERNOR BUGTI'S CLAIMS OF "INSURGENCY", AND CHARACTERIZING PROBLEM IN BALUCHISTAN AS "MORE OF A PROBLEM OF PERSONALITIES THAN PARTIES".

THIS CHARACTERIZATION OF THE PROBLEM BY PRIME MINISTER CAN REASONABLY BE CONSIDERED MOST AUTHORITATIVE AVAILABLE AND UNTIL AN EQUATION RESOLVING THE POLITICS OF PERSONALITIES INVOLVED IS FORMULATED, PRESENT UNSATISFACTORY, BUT MANAGEABLE STATE OF AFFAIRS IN PROVINCE LIKELY TO CONTINUE TO PERPETUATE THEMSELVES.

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